

M1948

RECORDS CONCERNING THE
CENTRAL COLLECTING POINTS (“ARDELIA HALL COLLECTION”):
MARBURG CENTRAL COLLECTING POINT, 1945–1950

National Archives and Records Administration
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Library Info--

INTRODUCTION

On the 28 rolls of this microfilm publication, M1948, are reproduced the records of the Marburg Central Collecting Point, 1945–1950. They consist of general administrative records, Marburg Central Collecting Point property accessions, the directory of Marburg Central Collecting Point property released to the Wiesbaden Central Collecting Point, and photographs. The Monuments, Fine Arts and Archives (MFAA) Section transferred Nazi-looted works of art and artifacts from various storage areas and shipped the objects to one of four U.S. central collecting points including Marburg. In order to research restitution claims, the MFAA officers gathered intelligence reports, interrogation reports, captured documents, and general information regarding German art looting. This microfilm publication includes a portion of the records that comprise the “Ardelia Hall Collection.” The entire collection is located in the Records of United States Occupation Headquarters, World War II, Record Group (RG) 260.

BACKGROUND

The basic authority for taking custody of property in Germany was contained in Joint Chief of Staff (JCS) Directive 1067/6, which directed the U.S. Zone Commander to “impound or block” certain specified categories of property, including those of the German Reich; the Nazi Party and affiliated organizations and their prominent members; and absentee owners of non-German nationality, including United Nations and neutral governments and individuals. The American Zone Commander was also required to impound all property that was transferred under duress or through wrongful acts of confiscation, disposition, or spoliation, and to block the relocation of works of art and cultural material of value or importance, regardless of its ownership. When the U.S. Army entered Germany in September 1944, provisions were made for the seizure of all categories of property, including that of the Nazi Party organization.

At the cessation of hostilities in May 1945, a number of temporary collecting points were set up by the 12th Army Group to store all cultural objects found in the U.S. zone in need of preservation or suspected of having been looted by the Germans. The seized property was turned over to the custody of the Office of Military Government, U.S. Zone (Germany) [OMGUS] when it became the successor to the U.S. Group Control Council, Germany (USGCC) on October 1, 1945. OMGUS was responsible for administering the U.S. zone of occupation and U.S. sector of Berlin, and for functioning as U.S. element of organizations comprising the Allied Control Authority, the name given to the four-power occupation control system.

Within OMGUS, the seized works of art eventually came under the control of the Property Division. The Property Division, established in March 1948, was created as the result of a reorganization of OMGUS functions related to finance, the economy, transport, communications, restitution, reparations, decartelization, and property control. The primary responsibility of the Property Division was to formulate and implement policies required in the fields of property control, German external assets, internal and external restitution, and reparations.

By 1946 only four of the collecting points remained and were located in Munich, Wiesbaden, Marburg, and Offenbach. When the Marburg Central Collecting Point was closed in June 15, 1946, its remaining property was transferred to Wiesbaden. The other three central collecting points (CCPs) became specialized.

The Wiesbaden Central Collecting Point held mostly German-owned material, especially that of the former Prussian State Museums, the Staedel Institute of Frankfurt, and the local museums of Wiesbaden, plus a certain amount of internal loot (materials confiscated from German nationals) and objects subject to restitution. At its height, this installation contained approximately 700,000 objects.

The Munich Central Collecting Point specialized largely in materials subject to restitution, although in addition it contained the cultural objects of the Bavarian State Museums. At its height, this central collecting point held in excess of a million objects.

The third of the specialized CCPs, the Offenbach Archival Depot, was devoted primarily to Jewish religious items, books, and archives. It handled more than 2½ million objects during its four years of operation.

The transition from military to civilian occupation administration was initiated by the Presidential appointment of the U.S. High Commissioner for Germany (HICOG) who assumed his duties on September 2, 1949. OMGUS organizations were progressively abolished and all functions transferred to HICOG organizations between June and September 1949. The Offenbach Archival Depot was closed in June 1949. Upon the termination of the Property Division on July 1, 1949, the property control functions with respect to the liquidation of claims devolved on the Central German Property Control Agency in Munich. Its directorate was composed of the four Land Civilian Agency Heads in the U.S. zone. The transition was completed by September 21, 1949, the same day of the establishment of the Federal Republic of Germany. OMGUS was formally abolished on December 5, 1949.

The Munich and Wiesbaden CCPs closed in August 1951, although some cultural objects remained at both facilities under U.S. control after that date. The Office of Public Affairs of the Office of the High Commissioner for Germany exercised residual restitution authority for these objects. Most of the OMGUS records, including the records of the Property Division, were retired to an Army record center in Kansas City until they were accessioned into the National Archives in the early 1960s.

During the period in which the CCPs operated, they administered the Monuments, Fine Arts, and Archives Sections of Bavaria, Bremen, Hesse, and Württemberg-Baden. They also received policy guidance from the Monuments, Fine Arts and Archives Section of OMGUS general headquarters. The composition of the records of the CCPs is unique among the records of OMGUS headquarters. The Offices of Military Government for Bavaria and Hesse created most of the records concerning the CCPs through their restitution and preservation programs from 1945 to 1949, but the records also contain materials of monuments and fine arts officers assigned to Supreme Headquarters, Allied Expeditionary Force (SHAEF) and U.S. Forces, European Theater Headquarters; records of Headquarters, Office of Military Government, U.S. Zone (Germany) [OMGUS]; records of the Office of the High Commissioner for Germany; and some papers added to various files by the State Department's Arts and Monuments Adviser, Ardelia Hall, while the records were on "loan" to her from 1954 to 1961. Because Ms. Hall worked extensively with these records, which were combined into one body, they are referred to as the "Ardelia Hall Collection."

The records of the CCPs document the preservation of monuments and fine art and the restitution of cultural objects by OMGUS and, much less adequately, the administration of the preservation and restitution program. A significant portion of this documentation is in German. In order to research restitution claims, monuments and fine arts officers gathered together intelligence

reports, interrogation reports, captured documents, and other records concerning fine arts and monuments in Europe. These research files constitute a considerable portion of the records. Included among these records are reports and original documents detailing the looting of the Einsatzstab Reichsleiter Rosenberg, the involvement of Hermann Goering in the cultural looting, and plans for the proposed "Hitler Museum" in Linz, Austria.

RECORDS DESCRIPTION

The records reproduced in this microfilm publication are in two formats: textual records and photographs. The textual records include administrative files and monthly reports regarding the collecting point's activities during its time of operation as well as property cards that document the movement and disposition of a particular looted object. The black-and-white photographs stapled to the front of the property cards were reproduced as individual photographs at the end of this publication and show a vast amount of art objects confiscated by Nazi Germany. In order to produce the highest quality microfilm image, the property cards and the photographs appear slightly larger than the original for greater clarity and readability.

Textual Records

The first series, General Records, 1945–1946, consists of daily journals, correspondence, and reports documenting the daily activities of the collecting point. The records relating to the German firm Foto-Marburg are the most voluminous. Foto-Marburg was the photographic firm affiliated with the University of Marburg, which produced photographs of cultural objects handled by the U.S. Central Collecting Points in the American zone. The Foto-Marburg records document its work at the collecting point and include photographic lists and correspondence between the collecting point and Foto-Marburg. Inventories of copy negatives obtained by the German *Kuntzschutz* of the art photograph collections housed by the Belgium Royal Museum of Art and deposited in the University of Marburg's Art Historical Institute. This series is arranged by subject or type of record.

The second series, Marburg Central Collecting Point Property Accessions, 1945–1949, consists of property cards including information such as author or artist, measurements, depot possessor, any identifying remarks, subject of art, material or medium used, condition of object, description of object, the presumed owner, and inventory number. Sometimes a photograph of the object is attached to the card. The front of each property card contains spaces for the following information: classification, author or artist, depot possessor, identifying marks, material, description, presumed owner, catalog number, claim number, negative number, bibliography, measurements and weight, depot number, subject, arrival condition, accession number, inventory number, photograph, other photos, and movements. The back of each card contains space for the following additional information: history and ownership, location, exit date, condition and repair record, and arrival date. The spaces are not always used. This series is arranged numerically by property accession number.

The third series, Directory of the Marburg Central Collecting Point Property Released to the Wiesbaden Central Collecting Point, 1945–1948, consists of property cards that include such information as author or artist, measurements, depot possessor, any identifying remarks, subject of art, material or medium used, condition of object, description of object, the presumed owner, inventory number, and sometimes a photograph of the object. The front of each property card contains spaces for the following information: classification, author or artist, depot possessor, identifying marks, material, description, presumed owner, catalog number, claim number,

negative number, bibliography, measurements and weight, depot number, subject, arrival condition, accession number, inventory number, photograph, other photos, and movements. The back of each card contains space for the following additional information: history and ownership, location, exit date, condition and repair record, and arrival date. The spaces are not always used. This series is arranged in two parts: alphabetically by subject; and alpha-numerically by shipment number.

Photographs

The series Photographs of Artworks and Decorative Objects Processed at the Marburg [Central] Collecting Point, ca. 1945 [260-MAR],¹ is arranged numerically by a number assigned at Marburg Central Collecting Point (CCP) as the work of art or object was processed. These black-and-white reproductions were photographed on a contract basis for OMGUS by the German art institution, Foto-Marburg. Shown in these photographs are paintings and drawings, ceramics, metal ware, and sculpture. Each photograph contains a brief caption or title of the artwork in German (some are also in English). Negatives for these photographs remained in the custody of Foto-Marburg.

RELATED RECORDS

Textual Records in the National Archives

GENERAL RECORDS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, RG 59

Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs

Records Maintained by the Fine Arts and Monuments Adviser 1945–1961 (“Ardelia Hall Collection”) (Lot File 62D-4) [A1, Entry 3104A]²

RECORDS OF THE AMERICAN COMMISSION FOR THE PROTECTION AND SALVAGE OF ARTISTIC AND HISTORICAL MONUMENTS IN WAR AREAS, 1943–1946, RG 239

RECORDS OF U.S. OCCUPATION HEADQUARTERS, WORLD WAR II, RG 260

Office of Military Government, U.S. Zone (Germany) [OMGUS]

Property Division, Records Concerning the Central Collecting Points (“Ardelia Hall Collection”)

OMGUS Headquarters Records, 1938–1951

Records of the Munich Central Collecting Point, 1945–1951

Records of the Offenbach Archival Depot, 1946–1951

Records of the Wiesbaden Central Collecting Point, 1945–1952

Miscellaneous Property Reports, 1945–1948

National Archives Accessioned Microfilm

RECORDS OF U.S. OCCUPATION HEADQUARTERS, WORLD WAR II, RG 260

Office of Military Government, U.S. Zone (Germany) [OMGUS]

¹ Series designators for photograph collections at the National Archives consist of the series title with a date span and record group number with an acronym or other devised abbreviation, shown here in brackets.

² Textual record series designators usually consist of the series title with a date span, the finding aid notation, and the Master Location Register (MLR) entry number, shown here in brackets.

Property Division, Records Concerning the Central Collecting Points (“Ardelia Hall Collection”)

Selected Microfilm Reproductions and Related Records, 1945–1949

National Archives Microfilm Publications

M1782, *OSS Art Looting Investigation Unit Reports, 1945–46*

National Archives Publications

Researchers should also consult *Holocaust-Era Assets: A Finding Aid to Records at the National Archives at College Park, Maryland*, compiled by Greg Bradsher (Washington, DC: National Archives and Records Administration, 1999). This finding aid includes information on specific areas within military records, such as War Department and Occupation records, as well as civilian records, such as those of the State Department, that contain information on looted assets.

Additional information concerning the Holocaust may be located on our web site at www.archives.gov.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Roll	Contents
1	General Records, 1945–1946 <i>From:</i> MFAA Marburg Central Collecting Point Daily Journal, June 1945–December 1945 <i>To:</i> Frankfurt (10-7-48)
2	<i>From:</i> Kippenberg Collection <i>To:</i> Marburg Catalogue, 1940–1944, A–L [1 of 4]
3	<i>From:</i> Marburg Catalogue, 1940–1944, A–L [2 of 4] <i>To:</i> Marburg Catalogue, 1940–1944, A–L [4 of 4]
4	<i>From:</i> Marburg Catalogue II, M–Z [1 of 5] <i>To:</i> Marburg Catalogue II, M–Z [3 of 5]
5	<i>From:</i> Marburg Catalogue II, M–Z [4 of 5] <i>To:</i> Marburg Catalogue II, M–Z [5 of 5]
6	Marburg Central Collecting Point Property Accessions, 1945–1949 Mar 9 – Mar 444 (with gaps)
7	Mar 445 – Mar 734 (with gaps)
8	Mar 735 – Mar 1182 (with gaps)
9	Mar 1183 – Mar 1795 (with gaps)
10	Mar 1796 – Mar 2257 (with gaps)
11	Mar 2258 – Mar 2778 (with gaps)
12	Mar 2779 – Mar 3248 (with gaps)
13	Mar 3249 – Mar 3728 (with gaps)
14	Mar 3729 – Mar 3949 (with gaps)
15	Directory of the Marburg Central Collecting Point Property Released to Wiesbaden Central Collecting Point, 1945–1948 Applied Art, Mar 112 – Etching, Mar 591/9
16	Etching, Mar 591/10 – Metalwork, Mar 1550
17	Metalwork, Mar 1551 – Paintings, Mar 231
18	Paintings, Mar 232 – Paintings, Mar 822
19	Paintings, Mar 823 – Paintings, Mar 2720

Roll	Contents
20	Paintings, Mar 2721 – Plastic, Mar 1425
21	Plastic, Mar 1426 – Sculpture, Mar 3427
22	Sculpture, Mar 3428 – WIE [Wiesbaden] 4413, In-shipment 54 [Mar 1925]
23	WIE 4413, In-shipment 54 [Mar 1926] – WIE 4413, In-shipment 54 [Mar 2549]
24	WIE 4413, In-shipment 54 [Mar 2550] – WIE 4426, In-shipment 59 [Mar 3481]
25	WIE 4426, In-shipment 59 [Mar 3482] – WIE 4478, In-shipment 67 [Mar 106]
26	Photographs of Artworks and Decorative Objects Processed at the Marburg [Central] Collecting Point, ca. 1945 [260-MAR] Mar 7 – Mar 625 (with gaps)
27	Mar 626 – Mar 1100 (with gaps)
28	Mar 1101 – Mar 3437 (with gaps)